valves being sold in the market, are not in conformity with any standards and do not meet the requirement under Rule 3, 4, 6 and 7 of Gas Cylinder Rule of 2004;

(b) how does the Ministry propose to stop these unauthorized and illegal activities; and

(c) who has given permission to manufacture these 1 kg and 2 kg gas cylinders, which are used for lighting purposes especially in the State of Jharkhand?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRIAL POLICY AND PROMOTION, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI ASHWANI KUMAR): (a) Gas Cylinders conforming to Indian Standards prescribed by the Bureau of Indian Standards are manufactured by units holding BIS Marks Scheme Licence and as per the drawings approved by the Chief Controller of Explosives under the Gas Cylinders Rules 2004 framed under the Explosives Act 1884. The quality of cylinders, regulators and valves bearing ISI mark are regularly monitored. Such cylinders are filled in LPG bottling plants licensed under the Gas Cylinders Rules 2004. However, recently some cases of illegal transfer of LPG from filled LPG cylinders to empty cylinders of 1 kg or 2 kg have come to the notice of the Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation through the State Police.

(b) The Petroleum and Explosives Safety Organisation (PESO), a Subordinate Office of Department of Industrial Policy & Promotion (Ministry of Commerce & Industry), is the nodal agency to look after the safety requirements of the Explosives and Petroleum Sectors. The PESO administers the Gas Cylinders Rules 2004 under Explosives Act, 1884.

In case of notice of any unauthorized and illegal activities the matter is always referred to the District Authority for action as provided under Rule 63 of the Gas Cylinders Rules 2004. Powers of inspection, search, seizure, detention and removal are provided under Rule 71 of the Gas Cylinders Rules 2004. Besides, Section 13 of the Liquefied Petroleum Gas (Regulation of Supply and Distribution) Order, 2000 exclusively dealing with such illegal activities, restricts storage and transport of LPG involving illegal filling or transfer of LPG from one cylinder to another.

(c) No manufacturer has been granted permission to manufacture 1 kg and 2 kg gas cylinders in the State of Jharkhand.

Decline in Seafood Export

3882. DR. M.A.M. RAMASWAMY: Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether the Indian seafood exports is declining;

(b) if so, the total export of Indian seafood during the last three years, country-wise, year-wise;

(c) whether the representatives of Indian seafood exporters have urged the Union Government to provide relief measures to enable them to face the stiff competition from other Asian countries;

(d) if so, the details thereof; and

(e) the steps taken by Government in this regard?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF

COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) and (b) Seafood exports from India have shown an increasing trend during the years 2004-05, 2005-06 & 2006-07. The export figures indicate a marginal decline of 9% from 1852.93 million US$ in 2006-07 (Apr 06-Mar 07) to 1684.64 million $ in 2007-08 (Apr 07-Feb 08). The total export of Indian seafood during the last three years, country-wise, year-wise is as under:—

(Value in US Million $)

Country	2007-08 (Apr-Feb)	2006-07	2005-06	2004-05
Japan	267.24	299.20	262.79	266.96
USA	230.24	297.08	372.62	345.52
European Union	593.97	610.95	484.02	405.40
South East Asia	123.61	136.43	132.70	139.77
China & Hong Kong	225.69	259.06	191.99	154.10
Middle East	85.84	82.47	69.64	54.70
Others	158.06	167.75	130.44	112.03
TOTAL:	1684.64	1852.93	1644.21	1478.48

(c) and (d) Yes, The Seafood Exporters' Association of India forwarded a representation requesting for continuation of issuance of DS-2031 Certificate by MPEDA for the goods to be shipped through third world countries to USA. The Government has allowed issue of DS-2031 Certificate by MPEDA in respect of consignment being directly to USA and also through third countries upto 31.03.2009.

(e) The Government has announced the following relief measures to protect the seafood industry:—

(i) DEPB rates enhanced by 3% for the marine products *w.e.f.* 01.4.2007 has been extended beyond 31.3.2008 as a special package for immediate relief from rupee appreciation;

(ii) Shrimps and prawns (ITC HS codes "030613" and "160520") have been brought under the Vishesh Krishi and Gram Udyog Yojana (VKGUY) scheme. Under the scheme duty credit scrip benefits are granted to the tune of 3.5% of the F.O.B. value of exports with an aim to compensate high transport costs;

(iii) The Government of India has decided to provide subvention of 4% in the rate of interest in pre-shipment and post-shipment credit to the marine products export sector;

(iv) The Government of India has also announced exemption from payment of service tax in respect of 15 taxable services linked to exports.

(v) 29 items of fish products have been brought under Focus Products Scheme 2004-09 (*vide* Public Notice No. 13/RE-2004) dated 25/05/2006 to increase export of products which have high employment intensity in rural and semi urban areas so as to offset the inherent infrastructure inefficiencies and other associated costs involved in marketing of these products. The exporters of those items shall be entitled for duty credit scrip equivalent to 2.5% of the f.o.b. value of exports.

(vi) In the recently announced FTP, enhanced duty credit scrip of 2.5% (instead of the normal 1.25% under FPTS) is offered for export of high value added manufactured products.

(vii) Basic Customs Duty on bait fish used for fishing of tuna (ITC HS code "030379") is reduced from 30% to NIL *vide* Notification No. 21/2008-Customs.

(viii) The Customs duty payable under Export Promotion Capital Goods (EPCG) Scheme has been reduced from 5% to 3%.

(ix) Allowed extension of time upto 31.03.2009 for issue of DS-2031 Certificate by MPEDA in respect of consignment being exported directly to USA and also through third countries.

(x) The Marine Products Export Development Authority continues to operate the various schemes for extending technical and financial assistance to the seafood processing units all over India for modernization of the processing units and also for technology upgradation for production and export of value added marine products.

Concessions for export of rice

†3883. DR. MURLI MANOHAR JOSHI:
SHRI RAM JETHMALANI:

Will the Minister of COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY be pleased to state:

(a) whether it is a fact that schemes on economic concessions for export of Basmati and non-Basmati rice in the first 9 months of the years 2004-05, 2005-06 and 2007-08 were implemented by the Government;

(b) if so, the names of these schemes; and

(c) the extent of likely revenue loss under these schemes during each of the above years?

THE MINISTER OF STATE IN THE DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE, MINISTRY OF COMMERCE AND INDUSTRY (SHRI JAIRAM RAMESH): (a) to (c) Prior to 27.03.2008, export of non-Basmati rice and prior to 03.04.2008, export of Basmati rice were entitled for Duty Entitlement Pass Book (DEPB) benefit. This has been discontinued vide DGFT's Public Notice No. 130 dated 27.03.2008 and Public Notice No. 137 dated 03.04.2008 respectively for subsequent exports.

Other schemes operational are Advance Authorisation and Duty Free Import Authorisation (DFIA), wherein duty free imports are allowed for export production. All these schemes are not economic concessions, but are duty neutralization schemes and hence cannot be treated as schemes with revenue loss. Incremental exports in 2004-05 over 2003-04, were eligible for Target Plus Scheme benefit. Rice was in item included in it. This benefit was withdrawn for cereals in 2005-06. It is not possible to separately compute benefit for rice exports under this in 2004-05.

†Original notice of the question was received in Hindi.